

Springfield, PA — On Saturday, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-7) spoke to the Darby Creek Valley Association (DCVA), the Chester-Ridley-Crum Watersheds Association (CRC), and the Pennsylvania Organization of Watershed and Rivers about the protection and enhancement of our stream corridors, watershed review, and watershed management.

This meeting was a follow-up to his January meeting with the Darby Creek Valley Association about the Darby conservation plan, in which he stated that the Darby conservation plan is excellent in many regards as a way ahead in regards to how to get more wetlands and how to do proper watershed management; however, he noted that it should be based on updated mapping and needs to be done with other major creek organizations in the district. Joe discussed with DCVA the idea of bringing together the other organizations, and eventually the municipalities, so that there will be one holistic approach, which will include the resources to support the new mapping.

“As someone who grew up in the Darby Creek watershed, I know the value and importance these watersheds have on our community,” noted Joe. “I will continue to work with all interested parties to develop a comprehensive watershed review that will lend itself to better defining the problems and serving as a comprehensive action plan for all involved to help implement.”

In response to his meeting with DCVA, Congressman Sestak met with the Army Corps of Engineers about the need to have a comprehensive watershed review. In this meeting, the Army Corps stated that the areas surrounding these creeks are heavily urbanized and have suffered repeated flooding and environmental degradation and that a comprehensive watershed review is needed to examine the Creeks in detail, so that causes and potential solutions can be identified. Also, the Corps noted because of the dense development and population conditions a comprehensive review is necessary because a remedy in one area may have a severe impact downstream or in some cases upstream of a specific site in question. A watershed systems evaluation will determine how to best address the problems in a comprehensive manner and to look at solutions that combine traditional flood damage reduction measures with environmental restoration of streams and flood plains.

Saturday’s meeting with the watershed groups was to discuss the next steps that need to be taken, including meeting again with the Army Corps of Engineers to develop and fund a comprehensive review of our watersheds. As was discussed in Joe’s meeting with the Army Corps and again today with the watershed organizations, the next phase would be for the Army Corps of Engineers to conduct a Reconnaissance study, which would use existing information

to identify the problems, needs and opportunities regarding water resources in the study area. This would also require the need for interested, non-Federal entities like the DVCA, CRC, and the Pennsylvania Organization of Watersheds and Rivers to partner with the Corps as a sponsor of a Feasibility study, which would consist of detailed data collection and evaluation, formulation of several alternative plans, and a report making specific recommendations to Congress.

Joe noted that the process would cost around \$2-4 million and could take from 2 to 5 years, depending on how soon the money was available. Once that process is completed, the project could be submitted for Congressional authorization in the Water Resources Development Act.

“What we do today will have a significant impact on our watersheds tomorrow,” added Joe. “It is essential we start right now to develop and implement a comprehensive plan that all interested parties and municipalities can participate in.”

The DCVA is an all volunteer, nonprofit organization dedicated to the protection and enhancement of all the Darby Creek watershed’s resources, including water, wildlife, historical sites, and the floodplain. The Darby Creek watershed encompasses three counties in southeastern Pennsylvania (Montgomery, Delaware, and Philadelphia) and eventually flows into the Delaware River at Tinicum, PA. DCVA is working to implement a volunteer monitoring network (“StreamWatch”) in the Darby Creek watershed which has strong environmental education component and reaches out to local schools and stream-side residents.

Chester-Ridley-Crum Watersheds Association is also a nonprofit organization devoted to the protection of water resources and the natural environment of the Chester, Ridley, and Crum Creek Valleys, and the health, recreational, and quality of life benefits they afford the residents of this region. Their stewardship area encompasses 132 square miles and 35 municipalities, from the South Valley Hills to Delaware Bay.

The Pennsylvania Organization of Watershed and Rivers advocates for the protection, restoration and enjoyment of all of our water resources throughout Pennsylvania.

Joe grew up in the Darby Creek Watershed in Springfield Township.

*Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives.*

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